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ABSTRACT

Written for parents of handicapped children, the booklet provides information about special education and offers practical suggestions about working with school personnel to cooperatively plan for the child's education. Topics covered include content, development and process of an individualized education program (IEP) (including suggested activities before, during, and after the IEP meeting); recourses if problems arise; and resources for parents of handicapped children. (CL)

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practical advice to parents on special education

EC 114544

Midwest Regional Resource Center

1979

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This document was developed pursuant to contracts with the Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Bureau of Education for the handicapped, contract number 300-78-0023. The opinions expressed herein, however, do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U. S. Office of Education should be inferred.

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PREFACE

For Parents Only is a handbook written for parents of handicapped children. This handbook provides parents practical suggestions on how to work with school personnel to plan an appropriate educational program for their child. There is no one parent or educator who can do it alone. The handicapped child needs assistance from parents, principals, special and general education teachers and possibly other specialized personnel. The key to meeting the exceptional needs of the handicapped child is working together. It is with this idea that this handbook was written.

In preparing this handbook, the Midwest Regional Resource Center wishes to thank Roger Kroth, Lucille Hart and Joyce Shaffer for their worthy assistance in reviewing and editing. The Center also expresses gratitude to Kathy Glenn for her motivating graphics that appear throughout this document.

Raymond L. Feltner
Project Director

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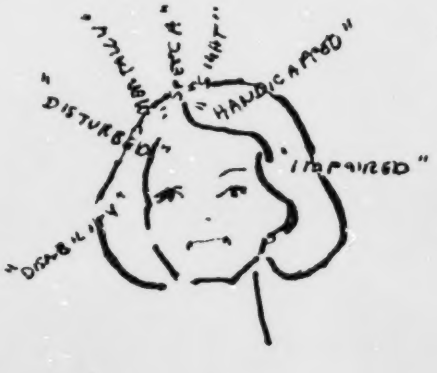
FOR PARENTS ONLY...

practical advice to parents
on special education

For a child with exceptional needs, learning is difficult without special help. Parents and educators share the most significant roles in providing the child with the help he needs. Separately and together, they provide the exceptional child with opportunities to

learn, with the knowledge, skills and incentives needed to become an independent, productive adult. (1)

The United States Congress recognized these benefits and addressed parent involvement specifically in a recent law. Passed during the 94th Congress as the 142nd law, this federal law provides a free and appropriate public education to all handicapped children. Under this law, referred to as Public Law 94-142, you, as a parent of a handicapped child, have the right and responsibility to join educators in developing an appropriate educational program for your child. For Parents Only... has been designed to assist you in working with educators in a cooperative effort. This handbook provides information about special education and practical suggestions on how to work with school personnel.



HOW ARE HANDICAPPED CHILDREN DEFINED?

Many children have mental, physical, emotional or learning problems that make it

difficult for them to be part of a school program without special help. You may hear words such as, "handicapped," "emotionally disturbed," or "mentally retarded" to describe these children. These words are used to describe children who require special education as defined by law. These definitions are used to report to the State and Federal government and to obtain the extra State and Federal funds that are available for special education services. Most classifications are based on the results of tests and examinations and the judgments of a variety of professionals.

As a parent it is important for you to understand the terms used to describe children who may require special education so that you can communicate with the educators in your school district. This section of the handbook gives a general introduction to these definitions. (2)

The Federal law defines the following children as handicapped:

> mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, or children with specific learning disabilities who by reason thereof require special education and related services. (3)

If you are told that your child is emotionally disturbed, tests and examinations have revealed that your child has significant problems relating to other children and adults such as parents or teachers. Your child could be often unhappy and have a hard time accomplishing things that he/she has the ability to do at home or at school.

There is no easy way to know whether or not your child is emotionally disturbed, but if your child's behavior is extremely different from the behavior of other children of the same age and is extremely disturbing to other adults and children, he/she may need special help.

If you are told that your child is mentally retarded, tests and examinations have shown that your child shows an inability to learn and adapt at the same rate as other children. As the parent of a young child identified as mentally retarded, you may have noticed that your child's language and physical development is considerably slower than that of children of the same age or that your child seems unable to learn new skills as rapidly as others of his/her age.

Mental retardation can be mild, moderate, or severe. School districts use three general categories to describe mentally retarded children. The categories can be useful for reporting and planning purposes.

If you are told that your child is an educable mentally retarded child, this means that individual intelligence and other test results have shown that your child may learn somewhat more slowly than other children of the same age. You may be told that on intelligence tests your child has scored between 50 and 75.

If you are told that your child is trainably mentally retarded, this means that individual intelligence and other test results have shown that your child may learn and develop at a slower rate than other children of the same age. You may be told that your child has an IQ of 25-50.

If you are told that your child is severely or profoundly retarded, this means that individual intelligence and other test results have indicated that your child may learn and develop at a substantially slower rate than other children of the same age.

Many retarded children do not fit into one category. Your child may be educably mentally retarded in language development and trainably mentally retarded in physical development. However, understanding the categories that are commonly used may help you work more effectively with your school and community agencies.

If your child has a speech/language impairment, you or a teacher may have noticed that your child has difficulty talking. The child may substitute one sound for another, like "f" for "s", be unable to make certain sounds, leave sounds out, make some speech sounds that cannot be understood, stutter, or have difficulty understanding or using words or sentences.

Your child may have a problem seeing. If the problem is severe, you may be told by an eye doctor that your child is legally blind. This means that your child has a severe vision loss. Your child may be able to use his/her vision in some situations, but cannot use the sense of sight for ordinary purposes.

You may be told that your child is partially sighted. This means that your child can, with glasses, use his/her vision. Your child may be able to learn to read regular print with glasses or to read special books that are printed with large type.

Your child may have a less serious vision or eye problem. If your child squints or rubs his/her eyes, frequently holds books too close, has frequent eye infections or redness or pain, your child should be examined for a vision problem.

Your child may have difficulty hearing. If you are told by a doctor that specializes in hearing problems that your child is deaf, this means that he/she cannot use the sense of hearing for ordinary purposes. Because of the severe hearing loss, your child will need specialized training to learn to talk, either with speech sounds or with sign language or both.

If you are told by an ear specialist that your child is hard of hearing, this means that your child has a serious hearing loss, but can use the sense of hearing either with or without a hearing aid for ordinary purposes. Your child may need special training.

Your child may suffer from a less serious hearing loss. If your child often has earaches, asks to have instructions repeated, turns one ear to the speaker, strains to hear, speaks excessively loudly or softly, or has trouble discriminating sounds, your child should be examined for a hearing problem.

If your child has a physical problem such as cerebral palsy, heart disorders, disorders of the nervous system or another health or medical condition, your child may be considered by the school to be physically handicapped.

If your child has two or more primary handicaps such as deafness and blindness or severe emotional disturbance and mental retardation,

your child may be considered by the school to be multiply handicapped.

Children, who are identified as learning disabled, have a disorder in one or more of the mental processes needed to receive, organize, or express information. As a result, the child can have difficulty in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. A learning disability is not primarily due to a physical, mental or emotional handicap or to environmental, cultural, or economic factors. (4) In other words, if your child is learning disabled, your child has difficulty learning, not because he is mentally retarded or hard of hearing, but because your child may have problems receiving, organizing, or expressing letter sounds or words.

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Special education is defined by Public Law 94-142 in the following manner:

> "... specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents or guardians, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, including

> classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospital and institutions." (5)

Using the previous definitions, you and the specific educators, who have information regarding your child, will need to determine the following:

> Does your child actually have one or more of the handicapping conditions listed previously?
>
> Because of this handicapping condition, does the child require special education and related services, as they are defined above?

Children ranging in ages from 3 to 21 years may be entitled to special education and related services. This may not apply, depending on your own state's laws, for children in the 3 to 5 and 18 to 21 age range. Contact your local school district's Director of Special Education or School District Superintendent for your state's information on these ages.

HOW TO PLAN FOR YOUR CHILD'S SPECIAL EDUCATION

Public Law 94-142 states that after September 1, 1977, your handicapped child and each child receiving special education services must have an Individualized Education Program or IEP. The IEP is developed on an individual basis. It outlines what your child's specific needs are and how they can be appropriately met. Special education and related services are provided for your child after you and school personnel together determine what your child's greatest needs are. The IEP also states why your child is receiving these special education services. However, most importantly, the IEP provides an organized format for you and school personnel to use when you are planning an appropriate education for your child.

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)?

The term, individualized education program or IEP, conveys important information to you, as a parent. First, "individualized" means that the IEP must be addressed to the educational needs of your child alone, rather than a class or group of children. Second, "education" means that the IEP is limited to those elements of your child's education that are more specifically special education and related services, as defined in Public Law 94-142. This means that if your child is having problems only in math, the IEP will address itself only to your child's math problems. There won't be anything in it concerning reading or speech. Third, "program" means

that the IEP is a statement of what will actually be provided to your child, rather than a plan that provides guidelines from which a program must later be developed. (6)

The IEP assures that, when your child requires special education, it be appropriately designed to meet his/her special learning needs, and that the special education program outlined in the IEP is actually provided.

WHAT THE IEP MUST CONTAIN

- Your child's present level of performance. This is a statement of where your child is functioning today. It's not just test scores, but rather statements about your child, gathered from observation and teacher interaction.

- Your child's annual goals and short term objectives. Goals and objectives are statements that say what your child is expected to learn over a certain period of time. Most IEP goals are for the total school year. Objectives are for shorter amounts of time.

- The special education and other services that will be provided to help your child meet these goals and objectives.

- The dates special education and other services begin, and the length of time they will be provided for your child.

- The amount of time your child will be able to participate in the regular school program.

- The dates and methods for evaluating your child's performance and the effectiveness of the program in meeting your child's needs.

The IEP should give you a clear understanding of the expected progress of your child by beginning where your child is today, and stating the goals that will hopefully be achieved by the end of the year. As a parent, you hold a wealth of information about your child to share with the school personnel on developing the IEP.

HOW IS AN IEP DEVELOPED (7)

The IEP is developed in a meeting by a team. This meeting may be called a Placement Committee Meeting, an IEP Meeting, or a Staffing. The Federal law is specific about the persons to be involved in developing the IEP to insure that all persons with information about the child have input in making decisions representing the child's best interests. Therefore, one member

of the team should be an administrator of the local school district or a supervisor of special education. This person must be involved to assure that staff, space, and money needed to implement the IEP are available.

Another member of the team is "YOU", the parent.

You possess important information about your total child - his or her development, preschool history, and unique needs - which is critical to the program. Further, the Federal law gives you the responsibility to be participants in all decisions about your child's educational program. You have the opportunity to share what you believe is proper for your child's educational needs, along with the other members of the team. You are not required to attend this meeting, but it is to your benefit and your child's benefit to work cooperatively with school personnel in planning your child's education. This is where

you can make the biggest contribution to your child's education, by taking part in the decision making and planning.

The child's teacher is another member of the IEP team. Teachers are the primary persons responsible for putting the IEP into action. Therefore, they must be involved in program planning and placement decisions. The teacher is in a qualified position to assess the proper setting, skills and supportive services needed to meet your child's instructional needs. The teacher also provides a means of communication between classroom and home - an essential part of successful programs. Including the teacher on the team reduces the possibility of breakdown in important communication and helps eliminate misunderstanding and confusion for you about your child's program. Additionally, the teacher can more easily put the IEP into action by being involved with the IEP team.

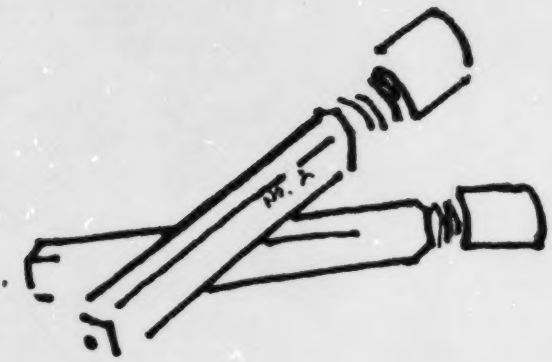
A fourth member of the team may be your child, if believed appropriate. In the past, children may not have had an opportunity to give their views on their own program. Your child, as part of the team, now has the potential opportunity to relate his/her feelings, desires, and reactions to decisions as they are developed. This type of input can prove valuable in writing an ideal IEP.

If your child has been evaluated for the first time, then a fifth member of the team is needed to attend the IEP meeting. This would be someone familiar with the testing administered to your child. This evaluator can explain testing procedures, purpose for selection of tests and results from the administration of the tests.

At the IEP meeting, members of the team: 1) share information that helps to identify what your child's needs are; 2) plan how to meet those needs; and 3) determine where those needs can be met. This information is recorded on an IEP form.

The sequence of these three steps is significant. Identifying your child's educational needs and describing your child's specially designed instruction must be accomplished prior to considering appropriate program placement. This provides a rationale for placing your child in any program. This means the "MR classroom" is only appropriate for the "MR child," if it addresses a specific educational need such as one-to-one instruction.

For many parents, the IEP meeting may be the first time they have met with school personnel, and they may feel uncomfortable. School personnel, not experienced in working with parents to develop a child's IEP, may also feel uncomfortable in encouraging parent's participation. However, the law recognizes the benefits of parent participation in this planning, and requires the school to encourage parent participation. In order to make your participation meaningful, a list of suggestions follows.



WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE IEP (8)

Prior to the IEP meeting, you, as a member of the team, might consider gathering some information regarding your child. The following suggestions will help you gather and organize that information. These are not things you must do, but ideas or suggestions of the kind of information that would help you be a more active team member, and also be of interest to school personnel.

- Make an appointment to visit your child's classroom to observe your child in the instructional situation with other students.

- Start a notebook on your child's developmental educational history:

  List names, addresses and phone numbers of persons you've contacted regarding your child, and the dates of the visits and phone calls. Record as much as

you can about what was said, the questions asked, answers given and recommendations made.

Acquire copies of important information appropriate to making education decisions about your child, (i.e. physician's report and medical history, reports and dates of any testing results, record of attendance, and letters regarding services received by your child).

Try to have all relevant information and records about your child organized and ready for quick reference.

- Talk to your child. Get some first hand information on how s/he feels about school. Know how the school day is organized and the names of teachers and programs that occupy his/her day. Find out what s/he likes and doesn't like about school. Ask him/her what he'd like to do better.

- Keep records of your child's behavior at home, so that you can accurately share information with school personnel. Such information as your child's home responsibilities, interests, likes and dislikes, typical daily schedule, interaction with brothers and sisters and neighborhood youth should be noted.

- Make out a list of questions that you want to ask team members regarding your child's needs. (See IEP Checklist for Parents in the Appendix for some suggested questions.)

- From the information collected and from talking with your child, make a list of some thoughts to share at the IEP meeting. As a member of the team, be prepared to share your feelings regarding your child's needs and expectations. (For example, you may want him to be able to walk by the end of the school year.)

- Make a list of suggestions that you would like to see written into your child's educational plan.

WHAT TO DO AT THE IEP MEETING (9)

Developing the IEP is a team effort conducted cooperatively by parents and professionals. The meeting to develop the IEP should accomplish the following:

- Provide each member of the team with a clear picture of your child's strengths and weaknesses;

- Identify, in order of importance, your child's educational needs, and what goals

can reasonably be accomplished within the school year;

- Specify objectives leading to the accomplishment of each goal;

- Determine how to teach your child, and explore what materials are likely to be needed;

- Explore possible program and placement alternatives for your child.

The following suggestions may be helpful to you when you are actually at the IEP meeting.

- Be on time for the scheduled meeting. If you cannot make the appointment, notify the school in advance. This lets school personnel know you are aware they have busy schedules, and that someone else may be able to use your cancelled appointment time.

- Find out how much time has been scheduled for your child's IEP meeting. This will help you in planning when to provide your information, before school personnel have to go to the next meeting.

- Be attentive. Pay attention to what information is being shared about your child. Take notes if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask questions if you don't understand something. Educators, especially special educators, tend to use jargon. If you do not understand the meaning of some terms, ask for an example or demonstration of what they mean.

Remember the IEP should be clearly understood by all. Test scores without explanation of what they mean are inappropriate. Be sure that present level of performance supports the student's goals and objectives.

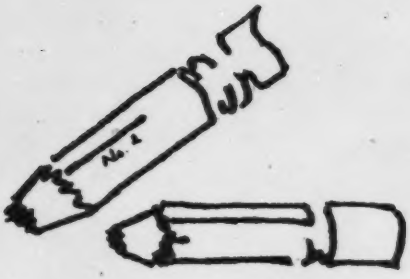
- Be prepared to share relevant information about your child. A specific observation of an incident may be more helpful than a generalization. Be brief but concise. Share information that can be used by the team in determining the student's special needs and most effective programming. Have copies of letters and records organized and quickly available, if requested.

- Go into the IEP meeting with a positive attitude. Actively participate in the development of your child's educational program.

  A problem may arise if you go into this meeting with decisions already made. Listen to what other members have to say. Ask questions and request to see all of the information. But, try not to create an atmosphere of parent vs. school. Remember the purpose of the team approach in developing the IEP is to consider all the information available before the team comes to any decision.

  The schools are interested in doing what is best for your child. Help create an atmosphere where information is shared freely. Keep in mind that this is a new experience for most schools. Your participation, as a positive member of

the team, can help create an atmosphere where an effective IEP is developed.



WHAT TO DO AFTER THE MEETING (10)

Using the IEP goals and objectives, your child's teacher and other educational personnel will be responsible for planning daily instruction for your child in school. Following are a few suggestions on how to continue your involvement with the school and to begin to work with your child at home in some of the same skill areas as the teacher is working to develop.

Visit your child's classroom

This is particularly important when your child goes to a different class or school than s/he attended previously. In any event, try to make periodic visits to the school, by appointment. You can observe firsthand your child's progress, talk over problems and successes, and

ask for changes in your child's program where appropriate. Observing your child's classroom and conferring with the teacher(s) not only keeps you up to date on what's happening with your child in school, but also allows you to convey your interests and concern. This will encourage and sustain the teacher's efforts with your child. Visits to your child's class while it is in session are most appropriate if your child is in the primary grades. With older children, especially if they are in an integrated program, it may be best to simply talk to the teacher after school. Classroom observations can give you ideas about how to be more effective with your child at home and to learn what is realistic for your child.

Arrange for a home visit

If you work during the day and are unable to visit school, here is an alternative. Invite your child's teacher to your home. This is particularly important if you cannot visit school. It will also encourage and sustain the teacher's efforts with your child.

Volunteer to assist in your child's classroom

Many special education programs utilize parent volunteers in the classroom. Some programs provide training for parent volunteers. Find out if your child's school has such a program, and if so, consider becoming a part of it. Parent volunteers can observe and acquire effective teaching skills which can later transfer to the home situation. Some programs arrange for parent volunteers to work in the classroom with a child other than their own - at least initially. In any event, the experience is usually a very

valuable one for parents of children with exceptional needs.

Participate in parent training programs

More and more programs are being offered in the schools to train parents of handicapped children to work with their children at home. If your school does not have such a program, you might suggest that one is started and help organize it.

Some of the home intervention programs rely on group meetings and written assignments as a way of teaching parents. Other programs combine parent training with in-classroom experience. Parents can acquire the skills necessary to be effective teachers of their children at home, and can learn how to more closely match home training with the child's classroom instructional program. An added advantage of participating in a parent training program is the opportunity to interact with other parents of handicapped children. You usually find out that other parents have problems similar to your own in managing child behavior, fostering self-help skills, etc. You can also exchange helpful ideas and feel supported by other parents in the group.

Parent training sessions may be in the form of short courses over a period of weeks or one day workshops: they can cover a wide range of topics from how to teach your child specific skills, such as dressing or riding a bus, to general behavior management techniques.

Find out what's offered in your school and community and sign up for a training session! If that's not possible, do some studying on your own. Numerous books and magazines designed to

assist parents to teach their handicapped child are available. Many of these resources can be found in your local public library.

Reinforce classroom instruction with home instruction

With the emphasis on parent involvement in educational programming, you will be invited to discuss your child's short term instructional objectives with the teacher and other professionals. Use this opportunity to select, with the help of the teacher, a skill area in which you can work with your child at home. Encourage your involvement to be written into the IEP, reinforcing your active participation on the team. Get the teacher's help in the following areas:

- Developing an instructional objective;
- Selecting a teaching method and some instructional materials if necessary, and;
- Assuming the responsibility for helping your child to reach that objective.

Parents can be working with the child at home on one of the same skill areas that the teacher is working on or on a different skill. Either way, it is important to find out from the teacher what teaching methods s/he is using with your child so that you can have consistency between home and school. By doing this you can maximize your child's chance for successfully meeting the objective. Consistency in the approach is critical and especially important for children who are severely handicapped. For example, parents should initially use the same words in giving directions that the teacher uses

(e.g., "Get the ball" versus "Find the ball" or "Bring me the ball") so that the child will not be confused. Later, of course, it will be important to provide the child with practice in responding to a variety of different words.

WHY BE INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The importance of learning to develop a systematic program for teaching your child at home, and of keeping in close touch with your child's teacher(s) cannot be overemphasized. Here are a few convincing reasons why you should become actively involved in the implementation of your child's educational program: (11)

- Without effective parent involvement, the effect of even the best classroom program cannot be fully achieved.
- Training parents of preschool children has beneficial carry-over effects to

other children in that family.

- Planned home training by parents, when combined with a classroom for the child, can almost double the rate at which the child learns a particular skill.

- Since parents of handicapped children will have greater responsibility for their child over a longer time period than parents of normal children, they need teaching and "parenting" skills beyond those required by parents of normal children.

Keep communications lines with school personnel open. Share the responsibility of the team in planning and carrying out educational decisions made regarding your handicapped child. By working actively with the school, the benefits to your handicapped child are numerous.

Your effort in working with the school creates a better understanding of your handicapped child's needs. Only through this understanding can the most appropriate individualized educational program be developed and implemented for your handicapped child.

IF A PROBLEM SHOULD ARISE

In the process of participating with your school in planning your handicapped child's education, questions and problems may arise. From time to time there may be things that concern or disappoint you. You may find things you would like to change.

If you have concerns about your child's education, first make every possible effort to resolve them informally. Here are some suggestions: (12)

- Set up an appointment to discuss your concern, either by scheduling a meeting or a phone conversation. It's best to preface a phone call with a note, asking to call you when they have time to talk about ... and write your concern. Make sure to allow enough time to deal with the issue.

- Be sure you meet with the individual that can solve your problem. This means, if your child is having problems in his classroom, you'd speak with his teacher and not the principal. You may want to involve the principal later, but you are most likely to find a solution to your problem by going about it directly.

- Be objective. Present your concerns in a way that someone else can respond to with equal concern and interest. Don't create a defensive atmosphere where arguments are heard in place of solutions. Use facts to explain your concern, not feelings. Give them the facts so they can do better.

- Don't let emotion destroy your conference. As soon as the conversation loses emotional control, when you feel mad or defensive, bring up one of the positive pieces of feedback. Praise is something you can all agree on. Stay on that topic until emotional control is resumed. Then, go on to any more corrective information you want to put out.

If an informal approach doesn't result in a satisfactory solution to your problem, talk to the school principal and the special education director of your district. In many cases, your concerns can be resolved at these levels. There are steps you can take in finding a solution to your concerns. While they may not always bring immediate action, over the long run they can bring about change not only for your own handicapped child, but for other handicapped children needing services.

Be sure that the appropriate personnel in the special education department really are aware of your child's situation. One example, when this might be appropriate, is when no program currently exists for your child. It is discouraging to be told after your child has been diagnosed and found to be in need of special services that your school is unable to provide the program s/he needs. Making the special education department aware of the situation would include giving them all the necessary diagnostic reports and recommendations. Keep informed of new programs, and keep your lines of communication to the school staff open.

You may want to bring the problem before the local Board of Education. Letters to board members and appearances before the Board may result in immediate help for individual problems, and can also lead to planning for new programs. Make certain that communications to and from school officials are in written form. If information is conveyed by telephone, ask for a letter of confirmation so that your record is complete.

Get in touch with your State Director of Special Education. You may find that he is aware of the particular problem you are experiencing and may be taking steps to fill the gap as quickly as possible. He may also welcome your testimony as evidence of the need for increased funds for additional programs.

WHAT ARE THE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

It is important to all of us to know that there is someone we can depend upon for help when we need it. Sometimes we need practical help, as when we rely upon an attorney to define our legal rights and protect our interest in court. Sometimes we need emotional help, as when we turn to a friend for sympathy and understanding. A handicapped child has special needs. In many ways your child needs the help of other people even more than the rest of us do. Like all children, your handicapped child needs at least one caring adult to help him/her develop while very young. But, unlike other children, your handicapped child is likely to need a great deal of continued support as he/she grows older. Even as an adult, there are situations your child may not be able to handle independently. Your child may need the commitment of someone else who is willing to help. This can put tremendous demands on you, as parents of handicapped children, both financially and emotionally. Many

parents have joined state and national organizations. Some of these are especially designed for parents of handicapped children. These organizations can help keep you informed of pertinent information affecting your handicapped child.

Check in your local phone book to see if one of these organizations is listed:

- National Association for Retarded Citizens
- Council for Exceptional Children
- Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
- National Association for Mental Health

For more information about these and other parent groups, please see the Appendix.

The importance of parent groups cannot be over-emphasized. The progress that has been made in the last few years for your handicapped child is largely a result of their efforts. Listed below are some of the services provided by parent groups:

- Information and support to parents of handicapped children
- Preschools
- Camps
- Job training programs
- Experts on hard-to-find services
- Newsletters

- Magazines
- Reading lists
- Workshops
- Training for volunteers
- Social and recreational programs for handicapped young adults

Here are some other resources for providing parents of handicapped children with information:

- Center On Human Policy
  216 Ostrom Avenue
  Syracuse, NY 13210 (315) 423-3851

- Children's Defense Fund
  Washington Research Project, Inc.
  1520 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
  Washington, DC 20036 (202) 483-1470

- Closer Look
  National Information Center
  for the Handicapped
  P.O. Box 1492
  Washington, DC 20013 (202) 833-4160

- National Center for Child Advocacy
  Office of Child Development
  Department of Health, Education and Welfare
  P.O. Box 1182
  Washington, DC 20013 (202) 755-7747

You may wish to obtain a copy of P.L. 94-142 for more information. Copies of this Federal law are available from these places:

- Superintendent of Documents
  United States Government Printing Office
  Washington, DC 20402
- Library
- Congressman

You, as a parent, will be more effective in assuring that your handicapped child receives the most appropriate education when you work together with the school. It is important to remember that you have a unique understanding of

your child because you are the parents. The heart of the new special education law lies here. It is crucial that you, as the parent, be an active team member in the development of the IEP in order to insure that it will meet the unique needs of your handicapped child. Making decisions about your handicapped child is a shared responsibility. When you work closely with the school, there is a much better chance for your child to receive the kind of programming s/he really needs. Children benefit the most when there is active and cooperative participation by parents and school personnel.

REFERENCES

1 Kroth, Roger L. Communicating With Parents of Exceptional Children. Improving Parent-Teacher Relationships. Love Publishing Company: Denver, CO. 1975.

2 University of the State of New York. Your Child's Right To An Education: A Guide for Parents of Handicapped Children in New York State. Albany, NY. 1978.

3. Federal Register. August, 1977.

4 University of the State of New York. Your Child's Right To An Education: A Guide for Parents of Handicapped Children in New York State. Albany, NY. 1978.

5 Federal Register. August, 1977.

6 Ballard, Joseph Public Law 94-142 and Section 504 - Understanding What They Are and Are Not. Council for Exceptional Children. Reston, VA. p. 3. 1977.

7 Crawford, Dorothy. "Parent Involvement in Instructional Planning." Focus On Exceptional Children. Vol. 10, No. 7, December, 1978. pp 1-2. Denver, CO.

8 Western Los Angeles Direction Service. A Guide For Familes. Western Los Angeles, CA. 1978.

9 - 12 Ibid.

APPENDIX

IEP CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

IEP REQUIREMENTS

1. Present Levels of Educational Performance

QUESTIONS

What areas are covered (reading, writing, math, speech, language, social, self-help)?
What assessment was done in the skill areas? When?
Was the assessment thorough?
Do the results match your knowledge of the child's ability?

2. Annual Goals

QUESTIONS

Are they based on assessment of your child's present performance?
What changes are expected in your child's behavior?
Given your knowledge of your child, are they appropriate?

3. Short-term Instructional Objectives

QUESTIONS

Will they help your child reach the stated goals?
Can your child's progress on each objective be measured?
Could you tell if your child has mastered the objective?

Adapted from a paper prepared by Eugene Edgar and Leonard Kenowitz. University of Washington. 1977.

4. Evaluation Procedures and Review Date

QUESTIONS

How will your child's progress be measured?
When will the team meet to review/revise the IEP?

5. Placement Recommendation

QUESTIONS

What makes this placement appropriate to your child's needs?
Will your child be in contact with non-handicapped peers?
How often?

6. Special Education and Related Services

QUESTIONS

What services does your child need (speech therapy, physical therapy)?
Will they be provided?
By whom?
How often?
When will the services begin and end?

APPENDIX

PARENT GROUPS AND OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091 (800) 336-3728

National Association for Retarded Citizens
2709 Avenue E, East
Arlington, Texas 76011 (817) 261-4961

Association for Children With Learning Disabilities
5225 Grace Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15236 (412)881-1191

National Society for Autistic Children
169 Tampa Avenue
Albany, New York 12208 (518) 489-7375

National Association for Mental Health, Inc.
1800 North Kent Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209 (703) 528-6405

National Federation of the Blind
6217 Lebanon Avenue
Philladelphia, Pennsylvania (215) 879-0670

National Association of the Deaf
814 Thayer Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 (301) 587-1788

The Arthritis Foundation
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027 (212) 677-5790

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
3379 Peachtree Road, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30326 (404) 262-1100

National Easter Seal Society for
Crippled Children and Adults
2023 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612 (312) 243-8400

Epilepsy Foundation of America
1828 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036 (202) 293-2930

National Foundation - The March of Dimes
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, New York 10605 (914) 428-7100

American Association for the Education
of the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped
1600 Armory Way West
Seattle, Washington 98119

United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc.
66 East 34th Street
New York, New York 10016 (212) 889-6655